

it. The land will be free and clear for whatever further conveyancing or use these school districts have. It is a straightforward bill, and I urge my colleagues to adopt H.R. 1116.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me again express appreciation to the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN] for bringing before the House the bill by the gentleman from Texas [Mr. REYES] to release the Federal Government's reversionary interest in the Clint and Fabens independent school districts.

We on the committee are glad that we have been helpful to our friend from Texas on this matter. As I understand it, the school districts in his district in Texas have had this property since about 1940. The Federal Government originally retained a reversionary interest in the property for good oversight reasons.

□ 1230

According to the Department of State, it no longer has any interest in the property. In order to allow the district's ability to make best use of the property, it is necessary for us to pass H.R. 1116 to release the Secretary of State from the reversionary interest. Under this bill the release of the interest shall be conditional upon the property being used for public educational purposes. I urge the adoption of the measure.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. REYES], the sponsor of the bill.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this bill, which is highly important to two school districts in El Paso, the Sixteenth District of Texas. This legislation would make only a minor change in the law, but would provide much-needed relief to the Clint and Fabens Independent School Districts, and provide them the power to determine how to use one of their assets much more effectively.

Since 1957 the Clint and Fabens Independent School Districts in El Paso have used land conveyed to them by the Federal Government to enhance their agricultural and vocational curriculum. An agricultural farm used mainly by the Clint School District is situated on this land.

Before the farm was built, the Federal Government had let the land lie unused for 23 years. By locating an educational farm on this land, the Clint Independent School District made the land useful and an important dimension to their educational programming. For decades we have greatly appreciated the Federal Government's transferring this property to our school districts.

Over the years, however, transporting students to the educational farm has grown increasingly problematic. The land is located 2 miles beyond the outermost boundary of the Clint Inde-

pendent School District, and school officials and teachers must confront daily the difficulties of getting the students to the farm and back safely.

Students must travel 2 miles each way on busy streets. This takes time away from learning and places the students in danger during the school day. Also, in a district like Clint, most students do not have vehicles, so teachers and students must work to locate transportation to and from the farm.

Because of the distance to the farm, it would make sense for Clint to sell the land and use the proceeds to purchase land closer to the school. As a matter of fact, the school district has already located land directly adjacent to the school on which they could build an agricultural farm for their students. This would allow students simply to walk next door to the educational farm, avoiding costly transportation needs, danger, and increasing the learning time.

As the law is written, however, the State Department holds a reversionary interest in the land where the farm is currently located. This reversionary interest requires that ownership of the land revert to the Federal Government if any attempt is made to dispose of the lands.

For 40 years Clint and Fabens have been confined by this law, which requires them to either keep the lands, regardless of changes in local circumstances, or surrender it back to the Federal Government and leave their students with even fewer vocational resources and opportunities than are currently available.

Mr. Speaker, in pursuing this legislation, I have worked closely with the Department of State, which currently holds the reversionary interest in the land. I have a letter here from Barbara Larkin, Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs, which states that the Department no longer has an interest in this land and does not object to the release of the reversionary interest.

I have also worked closely with the Committee on International Relations on this bill, and I want to thank both the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN] and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. Hamilton) for their cooperation in this matter, and for bringing my bill to the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank their staffs, Ms. Kristen Gilley and Ms. Elana Broitman for their assistance in moving this bill forward. Waiving this reversionary interest is a simple and straightforward way to help the young people in my district in Texas. The language of the legislation is narrowly tailored to ensure that any proceeds from the sale of lands will go toward improving the education of students. The State Department does not want or need the reversionary interest, and it would provide much needed authority to my local school districts. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to be here with my colleague, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. REYES]. I want to give tribute to my chairman, the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN], who allowed me to represent him in bringing this bill to the floor.

The logic that our colleague, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. REYES], brings to us in this context also is present in a bill that my colleague might be not yet aware of, offered by the gentleman from Kansas [Mr. RYUN], regarding reversionary interests in land where there had been an easement for railroad use. Land should go back to its original owners when an easement is no longer needed. I applaud the gentleman from Texas for his thinking in this case. I urge that he might want to look at the other case as an example of a comparable approach.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 1116.

The SPEAKER pro tempore [Mr. UPTON]. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California [Mr. CAMPBELL] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1116.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING THE OCEAN

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, House Concurrent Resolution 131, expressing the sense of Congress regarding the ocean, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 131

Whereas the ocean comprises nearly three quarters of the surface of the Earth;

Whereas the ocean contains diverse species of fish and other living organisms which form the largest eco-system on Earth;

Whereas these living marine resources provide important food resources to the United States and the world, and unsustainable use of these resources has unacceptable economic, environmental, and cultural consequences;

Whereas the ocean and sea floor contain vast energy and mineral resources which are critical to the economy of the United States and the world;

Whereas the ocean largely controls global weather and climate, and is the ultimate source of all water resources;

Whereas the vast majority of the deep ocean is unexplored and unknown, and the ocean is truly the last frontier on Earth for science and civilization;

Whereas the ocean is the common means of transportation between coastal nations and carries the majority of the United States foreign trade;

Whereas any nation's use or misuse of ocean resources has effects far beyond that nation's borders;

Whereas it has been 30 years since the Commission on Marine Science, Engineering, and Resources (popularly known as the Stratton Commission) met to examine the state of United States ocean and coastal policy, and issued recommendations which led to the present Federal structure for oceanography and marine resource management; and

Whereas 1998 has been declared the International Year of the Ocean, and in order to observe such celebration, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and other Federal agencies, in cooperation with organizations concerned with ocean science and marine resources, have resolved to promote exploration, utilization, conservation, and public awareness of the ocean: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of the Congress that—

(1) the ocean is of paramount importance to the economic future, environmental quality, and national security of the United States;

(2) the United States has a responsibility to exercise and promote comprehensive stewardship of the ocean and the living marine resources it contains; and

(3) Federal agencies are encouraged to take advantage of the United States and international focus on the oceans in 1998, to—

(A) review United States oceanography and marine resources management policies and programs;

(B) identify opportunities to streamline, better direct, and increase interagency cooperation in oceanographic research and marine resource management policies and programs; and

(C) develop scientific, educational, and resource management programs which will advance the exploration of the ocean and the sustainable use of ocean resources.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SAXTON] and the gentleman from California [Mr. FARR] each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SAXTON].

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. SAXTON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAXTON. Today we are considering House Concurrent Resolution 131, Mr. Speaker, expressing the sense of Congress on the importance of the ocean, the gentleman from Hawaii [Mr. ABERCROMBIE] and I, for two purposes. First, it will publicize the importance of the oceans to the economy, environmental quality, and national security of the United States.

The ocean is critical to our Nation. Ninety-eight percent of the U.S. foreign trade travels by ship. Half of Americans live within 50 miles of the coastline. However, many U.S. ocean programs have received flat or decreasing funding over the last decade. We

cannot act to address this problem unless the public fully understands that the oceans are important to all Americans, whether or not they make their living directly from the sea.

Mr. Speaker, House Concurrent Resolution 131 helps to build this understanding. Also, it is interesting to point out that 1998 will be the International Year of the Ocean. Scientific and educational events designed to increase understanding of the oceans and ocean resources will be held throughout the year.

The international focus on ocean resources presents a very good opportunity for us to make substantive improvements to the U.S. oceans programs. House Concurrent Resolution 131 encourages the administration to take advantage of the Year of the Ocean to review and streamline ocean programs, and take steps to improve our understanding of the ocean resources.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution, will express congressional recognition of the importance of the ocean and congressional commitment to improving the ocean programs. Obviously, I hope everyone will support this bill.

I would also like to point out the important role that the gentleman from California [Mr. FARR] has played, not only in helping to bring this resolution to the floor, but relative to the subject of ocean environment, generally. His contribution has been very, very meaningful, and it has been a pleasure to work with him.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. FARR of California asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 131. Mr. Speaker, the U.N. General Assembly has declared 1998 to be the International Year of the Ocean. That is probably one U.N. action that everyone in this House can support.

It has been nearly 30 years, as the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SAXTON] pointed out, since the Commission on Marine Science, Engineering, and Resources, commonly known as the Stratton Commission, took a comprehensive look at the U.S. ocean policy. A large group of Members of Congress have recently urged the President to hold a White House conference on the ocean, and there will be an international exhibit on the oceans in Lisbon, Portugal, beginning next spring.

Without a doubt, the world is becoming focused on the oceans and 1998 is the year. It is time for all the world's seafaring nations to reexamine their ocean policies. The once boundless resources of the oceans have proven to be finite when pitted against our incredible technology. Many of our great

fisheries have been decimated. Coastal ecosystems are severely stressed by development and by pollution. Yet, we depend on the oceans more than ever for food, for transportation, and for recreation.

We need to take a long, hard look at how we interact with the oceans, and define a new relationship based on sustainable use, I repeat that, on sustainable use, of our ocean resources.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution is an excellent way for the House to launch that effort. I join my colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SAXTON] in urging bipartisan support. The gentleman from New Jersey is chair of the subcommittee. He has been a remarkable leader on this issue.

It is very interesting that today a Representative from New Jersey and a Representative from California get up to support this, because we are separated by land mass, but our two districts are joined by the oceans, the long way around, I might add. But the fact is that what affects one affects the other, so this resolution will help bring a sense of Congress that this is an important issue, and that we ought to, in this Congress, be spending more attention and more moneys on oceans than we are on outer space, because the oceans are our future, how we are going to survive on this planet.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman of the committee for his leadership, and I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me just emphasize just how important I think this subject is. Obviously, when we pass a resolution suggesting that Congress pay special note to something, or that the American people pay special note of something, obviously there is a good reason for us to do it.

I think what the gentleman from California [Mr. FARR] and I bring to the House together in terms of this subject is that we have both had experiences over the last decade or so that have shown us that while there are problems related to the oceans, and while we continue to need to make progress along that line, we have also made significant progress in the last 10 years.

One decade ago, in the summer of 1987 on the Atlantic coast, we had a horrific summer. We had dolphins washing up on our shores, we had algae blooms all up and down the East coast, and in my home State of New Jersey and on Long Island there was medical waste that washed up on our beaches. It was enough to lead anyone who would vacation in the Northeast at the shore or to eat products derived from the sea to take their vacations elsewhere, or to buy their food from some other source. It was an easy conclusion for the public to make.

Since 1987 and 1988, we have cooperated with the States, we have put Federal programs in place to help with the ocean environment, we have passed the Medical Waste Tracking Act, for example, we passed the sludge dumping prohibition that passed in 1988 or 1989, and generally speaking, the ecological state of our oceans has improved manifold since those very difficult times in the Northeast.

Mr. Speaker, as we move forward, we continue to have problems. We continue to have problems with the regulatory process through which we try to regulate fish and mammals that live in the ocean. I spoke of one the other day with the gentleman from California [Mr. FARR]. We have a Federal agency that regulates the fishing industry. It is known as the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Perhaps it has some goals that need to be changed, because really, every time I go home and talk to someone who lives by the sea, I hear another story about how we need to do a better job in making sure that the ocean environment is conducive to making a good home for fish and mammals and other animal life that live there.

□ 1245

This is indeed an important subject. The amount of people who live near the ocean is immense. The amount of the world's surface that is covered by oceans is huge, and it is in all of our best interests to take these subjects extremely seriously. And so I hope that today will not be just a pro forma vote, passing another resolution.

The United Nations has recognized how important this is on a global basis and has designated 1998 as the Year of the Oceans, internationally. It is in all of our best interests to support this bill and to carry this message out across the country and, in fact, around the world as to just how important these matters are.

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SAXTON. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the gentleman, because this is just one of many steps that he is going to take in his committee to try to strengthen the awareness and the law as it regards the oceans.

We spend a lot of time on this floor debating how we are going to help disaster stressed communities. We usually look at natural disasters and base closures as sort of the two major reasons that we need economic relief.

I happen to represent the city of Monterrey, CA, which at one time was the largest sardine port in the world, certainly well known by the writings of John Steinbeck in "Cannery Row." Sardines disappeared. They are coming back in small numbers now. But they are mostly a bycatch rather than the main catch. But that was in the late 1940's and early 1950's. Everybody has agreed that the reason they dis-

appeared is that they were just overfished. It shut down an entire industry, entire community. It was before we knew about disaster relief.

I think what we are seeing with the impact of the pfiesteria infection on the Maryland shores is that we have got to have a much better awareness of what is happening to animals, to fish, and to marine life, because we are really dependent on it. We may not be totally dependent on it for food stocks, but we are dependent on it for economic survival in our communities, for recreation, for tourism, for restaurants, and, essentially, if the ocean is not healthy, then our communities cannot be healthy.

So this attention that the gentleman's resolution and other bills that he is working on and I am working with him on, I think, is going to go a long way in bringing America to the forefront of being a pioneer, a new pioneer in the oceans, as we have been in the last decade. I thank the gentleman for his efforts.

I encourage all my colleagues to take this issue seriously, because it is about our future. It is about our weather. It is about our knowledge of weather, our knowledge of oceans, and essentially the quality of life on the planet Earth.

Mr. SAXTON. I thank the gentleman for his comments.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, House Concurrent Resolution 131 is a resolution that recognizes the importance of our oceans and the fact that 1998 has been internationally declared the "Year of the Ocean."

As the Congressman for all Alaska, I am keenly aware of how vital the oceans are to my constituents. With the largest coastline in the Nation of 6,640 miles, Alaskan waters contain some of the richest and most valuable fishing grounds in the world. Many Alaskan towns are connected to the rest of the State only by watercraft, and many Alaskan Natives depend on fish and marine mammals for their subsistence.

I strongly support efforts to focus attention on these bodies of water, which comprise nearly three-quarters of the Earth's surface. While remarkably we know little about many of the ocean's resources, in the future we are likely to grow increasingly dependent on the energy, food, and mineral resources that exist there.

During the past 3 years, the Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans has conducted valuable hearings on the importance of our fishery resources, the ocean disposal of radioactive materials, the impact of offshore mineral production, and the need to update nautical charts. In fact, we have been successful in convincing the appropriators that accurate charts are essential to the maritime community and that adequate funding is necessary.

The United States has always been a fishing nation, and these resources have provided protein to millions of Americans. It is crucial that our world's fisheries be properly managed and that effective conservation measures be enforced. By focusing attention on this issue, House Concurrent Resolution 131 serves an important purpose. I compliment the authors for highlighting the need to promote sound

stewardship of the oceans and their living marine resources.

I urge my colleagues to support House Concurrent Resolution 131.

Mr. BOEHLERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 131, expressing the sense of Congress regarding the ocean and recognizing 1998 as the international year of the ocean.

Congress, this Nation, and countries throughout the world need to foster a greater understanding and appreciation of our oceans. This resolution is one small but important step toward that end.

Ocean waters cover nearly 75 percent of the Earth's surface. They comprise such a dominant part of our national, social, and cultural environment that it would be foolish to try to even begin listing all the benefits and functions they provide.

Unfortunately, they are also fragile—at least more fragile in many respects than we would like to admit. Pollution, invasive species, encroaching populations, and other stressors can take their toll.

Concerted efforts are needed. The world's nations, including ours, should work more closely together to respect and conserve our global marine resources.

I commend Representative SAXTON for his efforts and the Resources Committee in general for its role in moving this resolution forward.

I should also add that the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee did not seek a referral of House Concurrent Resolution 131 but has various jurisdictional interests in it and in other efforts relating to oceans. The Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee, chaired by Representative WAYNE GILCHREST, and the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee, which I chair, are particularly interested in various environmental and transportation-related aspects of the oceans. We look forward to working on additional initiatives and legislative provisions that are consistent with the spirit of this resolution and protect and promote various aspects of the world's oceans.

I urge my colleagues to support House Concurrent Resolution 131.

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution. Next year is the International Year of the Oceans as designated by the United Nations. This designation hopes to draw attention to the need for conservation of the limited resources that our oceans provide. For years, humans have considered ocean resources as inexhaustible. As evidenced by the depletion and extinction of many fish species, the destruction of coral reefs and the pollution of waters around the globe, these resources are finite. We cannot continue to harvest the ocean without replenishing what we take. I am very pleased that the U.S. House of Representatives is recognizing the importance of the oceans and the need for the world to stop taking what they provide for granted. The oceans are an integral part of our lives whether we rely on them for food, transport or recreation. If we do not properly maintain our oceans, they will not continue to sustain us.

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members

may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the concurrent resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. UPTON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SAXTON] that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, House Concurrent Resolution 131, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. CONDIT. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5 of rule I and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

CORAL REEF CONSERVATION ACT OF 1997

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2233) to assist in the conservation of coral reefs, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2233

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Coral Reef Conservation Act of 1997".

SEC. 2. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this Act are the following:

- (1) To preserve, sustain, and restore the health of coral reef ecosystems.
- (2) To assist in the conservation and protection of coral reefs by supporting conservation programs.
- (3) To provide financial resources for those programs.
- (4) To establish a formal mechanism for collecting and allocating monetary donations from the private sector to be used for coral reef conservation projects.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **CORAL.**—The term "coral" means species of the phylum Cnidaria, including—

(A) all species of the orders Antipatharia (black corals), Scleractinia (stony corals), Gorgonacea (horny corals), Stolonifera (organpipe corals and others), and Coenothecalia (blue coral), of the class Anthozoa; and

(B) all species of the order Hydrocorallina (fire corals and hydrocorals), of the class Hydrozoa.

(2) **CORAL REEF.**—The term "coral reef" means any reef or shoal composed primarily of the skeletal material of species of the order Scleractinia (class Anthozoa).

(3) **CORAL REEF ECOSYSTEM.**—The term "coral reef ecosystem" means the complex of species associated with coral reefs and their environment that—

(A) functions as an ecological unit in nature; and

(B) is necessary for that function to continue.

(4) **CORALS AND CORAL PRODUCTS.**—The term "corals and coral products" means any liv-

ing or dead specimens, parts, or derivatives, or any product containing specimens, parts, or derivatives, of any species referred to in paragraph (1).

(5) **CONSERVATION.**—The term "conservation" means the use of methods and procedures necessary to preserve or sustain corals and species associated with coral reefs as diverse, viable, and self-perpetuating coral reef ecosystems, including all activities associated with resource management, such as conservation, protection, restoration, and management of habitat; habitat monitoring; assistance in the development of management strategies for marine protected areas and marine resources consistent with the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (16 U.S.C. 1431 et seq.) and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.); law enforcement through community participation; conflict resolution initiatives; and community outreach and education.

(6) **FUND.**—The term "Fund" means the Coral Reef Conservation Fund established under section 5(a).

(7) **SECRETARY.**—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Commerce.

SEC. 4. CORAL REEF CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary, subject to the availability of funds, shall use amounts in the Fund to provide grants of financial assistance for projects for the conservation of coral reefs for which final project proposals are approved by the Secretary in accordance with this section.

(b) **PROJECT PROPOSAL.**—Any relevant natural resource management authority of a State or territory of the United States or other government jurisdiction with coral reefs whose activities directly or indirectly affect coral reefs, or any nongovernmental organization or individual with demonstrated expertise in the conservation of coral reefs, may submit to the Secretary a project proposal under this section. Each proposal shall include the following:

- (1) The name of the individual responsible for conducting the project.
- (2) A succinct statement of the purposes of the project.
- (3) A description of the qualifications of the individuals who will conduct the project.
- (4) An estimate of the funds and time required to complete the project.
- (5) Evidence of support of the project by appropriate representatives of States or territories of the United States or other government jurisdictions in which the project will be conducted, if the Secretary determines that the support is required for the success of the project.
- (6) Information regarding the source and amount of matching funding available to the applicant.
- (7) Any other information the Secretary considers to be necessary for evaluating the eligibility of the project for funding under this Act.

(c) **PROJECT REVIEW AND APPROVAL.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall review each final project proposal to determine if it meets the criteria set forth in subsection (d).

(2) **CONSULTATION: APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL.**—Not later than 6 months after receiving a final project proposal, and subject to the availability of funds, the Secretary shall—

(A) request written comments on the proposal from each State or territory of the United States or other government jurisdiction, including the relevant regional fishery management councils established under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.), within which the project is to be conducted;

(B) provide for the merit-based peer review of the proposal and require standardized documentation of that peer review;

(C) after reviewing any written comments and recommendations based on merit review, approve or disapprove the proposal; and

(D) provide written notification of that approval or disapproval to the person who submitted the proposal, and each of those States, territories, and other government jurisdictions.

(d) **CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL.**—The Secretary may approve a final project proposal under this section if the project will enhance programs for conservation of coral reefs by assisting efforts to—

- (1) implement conservation programs;
- (2) address the conflicts arising from the use of environments near coral reefs or from the use of corals, species associated with coral reefs, and coral products;
- (3) enhance compliance with laws that prohibit or regulate the taking of corals, species associated with coral reefs, and coral products or regulate the use and management of coral reef ecosystems;
- (4) develop sound scientific information on the condition of coral reef ecosystems or the threats to such ecosystems; or

(5) promote cooperative projects on coral reef conservation that involve foreign governments, affected local communities, nongovernmental organizations, or others in the private sector.

(e) **PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY.**—In determining whether to approve project proposals under this section, the Secretary shall give priority to projects which promote sustainable development and ensure effective, long-term conservation of coral reefs.

(f) **PROJECT REPORTING.**—Each grantee under this section shall provide periodic reports, as the Secretary considers necessary, to the Secretary. Each report shall include all information required by the Secretary for evaluating the progress and success of the project.

(g) **MATCHING FUNDS.**—The Secretary may not approve a project under this section unless the Secretary determines that there are non-Federal matching funds available to pay at least 50 percent of the total cost of the project.

SEC. 5. CORAL REEF CONSERVATION FUND.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is established in the general fund of the Treasury a separate account, to be known as the "Coral Reef Conservation Fund", which shall consist of amounts deposited into the Fund by the Secretary of the Treasury under subsection (b).

(b) **DEPOSITS INTO THE FUND.**—The Secretary of the Treasury shall deposit into the Fund—

(1) all amounts received by the Secretary in the form of monetary donations under subsection (d); and

(2) other amounts appropriated to the Fund.

(c) **USE.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to paragraph (2), the Secretary may use amounts in the Fund without further appropriation to provide assistance under section 4.

(2) **ADMINISTRATION.**—Of amounts in the Fund available for each fiscal year, the Secretary may use not more than 3 percent to administer the Fund.

(d) **ACCEPTANCE AND USE OF MONETARY DONATIONS.**—The Secretary may accept and use monetary donations to provide assistance under section 4. Amounts received by the Secretary in the form of donations shall be transferred to the Secretary of the Treasury for deposit into the Fund.

SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to the Fund \$1,000,000 for each of fiscal years